



State of Connecticut
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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REPRESENTATIVE DEREK SLAP
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VICE CHAIR
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MEMBER
ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE
PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Good afternoon to the chairs, Senators Gomes and Miner and Representative Porter. I also want to acknowledge ranking member Rep. Bocchino.

I'm here to testify in support of Senate Bill 15 and House Bill 5386.

What's changed over the past year when it comes to the fight for pay equity in Connecticut? Nothing and everything.

Women still earn approximately 80-cents on the dollar for the same job as their male counterpart - costing them on average more than \$10,000 a year (the disparity is double for women of color). Last year a pay equity bill – modeled after legislation that passed unanimously in Massachusetts – stalled in Connecticut's House.

I'm hopeful, for a variety of reasons, that the General Assembly is ready to pass a strong pay equity bill.

First, reformers are focused on a simple yet powerful change in the hiring process. The idea is to prohibit employers from asking job candidates about their salary history. The premise is that if employers price the position instead of the person, inequities from the past will erode. (Hiring managers could still inquire about a job candidate's salary requirements in order to determine compatibility).

Secondly, citizen activists have helped to put what are traditionally considered 'women's issues' at the forefront of our public policy dialogue. As public awareness increases folks are realizing the wage gap impacts everyone.

Children are suffering. The Institute for Women's Policy Research reports that closing the wage gap would reduce by half the number of children with working mothers who are living in poverty. Seniors are also feeling the pain. The wage gap costs women on average \$418,000 over the course of their careers. The AARP reports that women over the age of 65 have a poverty rate of 11.6% - nearly double the rate for men. No wonder the AARP supports pay equity.

The final reason pay equity legislation is poised for success this year is that it's connected to the state's biggest need – a stronger economy. The National Partnership for Women and Families estimates that the wage gap costs the overall Connecticut economy more than \$5 billion annually.

The cost of inaction also makes our state less competitive. In the last year alone California, Oregon, Delaware, and New York City have banned the pay history question. Large corporations such as Amazon and Bank of America have also eliminated the practice – strong evidence it's not essential for recruitment. The Boston Chamber of Commerce helped to champion the pay equity bill in Massachusetts because it believes a fairer economy will help it attract millennials, the demographic Connecticut struggles with the most. Boston's Mayor Martin Walsh recently wrote that his goal is to make the city, "the premier place for working women."

Experts predict that if the current trend continues women in Connecticut will have to wait 50 years to be paid fairly. Even in the land of steady habits, this should be unacceptable.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Derek Slap", written in a cursive style.

Representative Derek Slap